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Weekly Update: H1N1 – A New Kind of Flu – What You Need to Know!

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H1N1 Vaccine News

Kansas is one of 36 states with widespread flu activity. 16,700 doses of the first H1N1 vaccine are now being shipped to Kansas. Riley County's share of this first shipment is expected to be around 500 doses.

Types of H1N1 Vaccine - Our first shipment, and 20% of the nation's supply of H1N1 vaccine, will be a nasal spray called FluMist. FluMist is a live virus vaccine and is not appropriate for persons with suppressed immune systems. This vaccine is safe and recommended for persons between the ages of 2 and 49 years who do not have any health problems. The more commonly known flu shots will arrive in the weeks and months after FluMist.

Who can get FluMist?

KDHE has applied FluMist's appropriate population information to the CDC's highest risk population recommendations and determined that FluMist should first be offered to two groups:

- 1) health care workers who have direct contact with persons who may be infected. These health care workers must be no older than 49 years and cannot be pregnant or have any health problems.
- 2) children with no health problems between the ages of **2 and 9** years. This is a change from last week, when the priority group was defined as 2 – 4 years of age. Children younger than 10 years of age need two doses, four weeks apart, of the vaccine, so it is important to get them vaccinated as soon as possible.

The health department and all providers will comply with these guidelines. Keep in mind that the guidelines will change as more and different types of vaccine become available.

When and Where will H1N1 Vaccine be Available? We anticipate receiving FluMist H1N1 vaccine sometime next week. When any H1N1 vaccine becomes available, we will post this information on our website at the county: www.rileycountyks.gov. Look for "**H1N1 Local Info**" on the home page. Other government and community agency websites are adding a link to this site. We will also post to the media and put it on our phone message. When vaccine arrives, we will hold a clinic at the health department at a time according to this schedule: Mondays – Thursdays 4:00 PM – 5:30 PM and Fridays 7:00 AM – 8:30 AM. Clinic times are dependent upon supply. If supply continues, those in line by clinic closing time will be served that day.

Cost – H1N1 vaccine will be provided free of charge by all providers. Private providers may charge administration fees. The health department will bill insurance for administrative fees but individuals will not be charged. Persons without insurance coverage will not be charged at the health department. It is our goal to vaccinate all who need it, regardless of ability to pay.

Vaccine Consent Forms are being made available throughout the community, at doctor's offices, and websites such as the health department's at www.rileycountyks.gov. **Completing consent forms before coming to a vaccination clinic will speed the process up considerably.** The Vaccine Consent Form is attached to this email.

Antivirals – CDC still cautions to use antiviral medications, such as Tamiflu and Relenza, judiciously, so that we don't run out of this important resource and to help stop the virus from becoming resistant to antivirals. We are told that the private supply is adequate. The public supply, for those under and uninsured, will be dispensed according to KDHE guidelines, through the health department and contracted private providers, especially pharmacies.

Seasonal Flu - Seasonal flu vaccine is still available to the general public at the health department during regular clinic hours. You do not need an appointment. Flu shots are \$25 but no one will be refused for inability to pay. We have already given approximately 3000 seasonal flu shots and still have plenty of this vaccine. The flu shot will provide protection throughout the duration of the flu season. It will not protect you against the new H1N1 virus (swine flu). Everyone over the age of 6 months who is not allergic to any component of the vaccine should be vaccinated for seasonal flu.

For further information please contact the health department or go to www.rileycountyks.gov or www.kdheks.gov/H1N1.